

CLAIM

A SONG OF IRE AND VICE

#1 OF 4



ALMES WRIGHT DIMITRIEVSKI BIRCH





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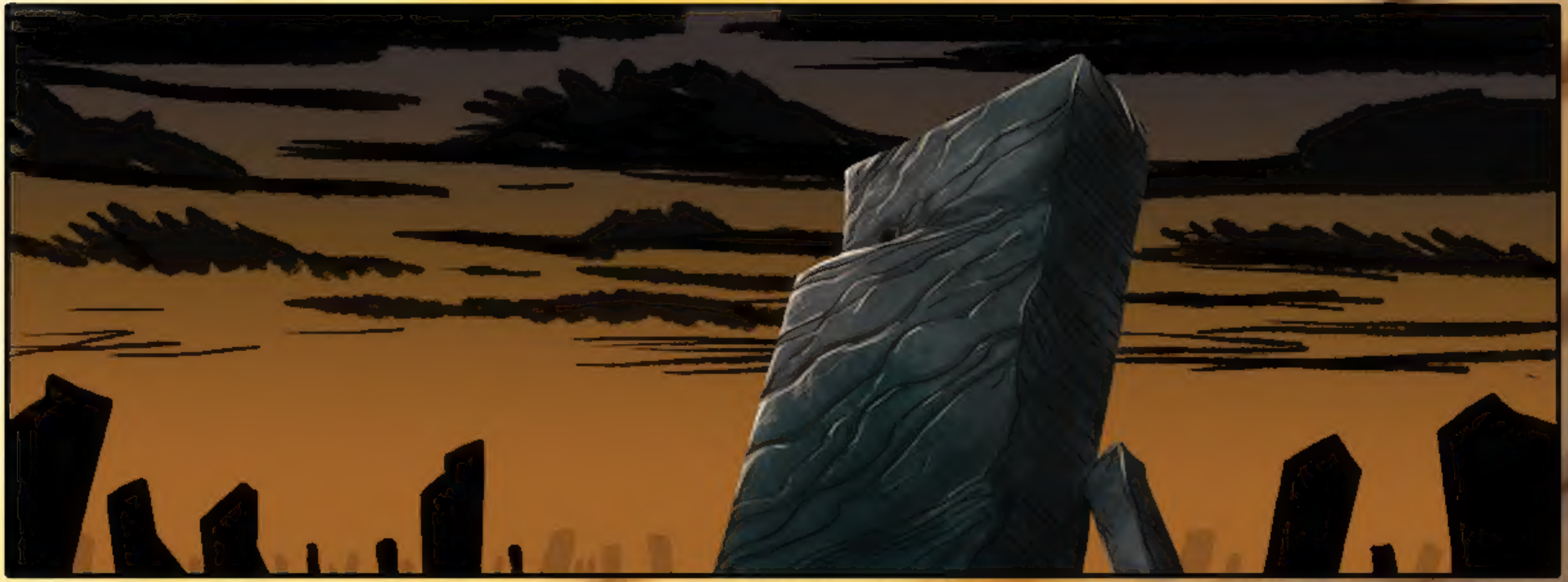
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I ASSUME
HE MEANS
US...

YOU
MORONS
LEFT ME
DOWN THERE
TO DIE!

I HAD TO
CLIMB UP ALL
THOSE ROCKS
MYSELF!

LORD GOURD:
WEALTHY DWARF
ARISTOCRAT.
DOES NOT LIKE
CLIMBING ROCKS.



...

WHAT
DO YOU *EXPECT*?
WE'RE MERCENARIES.
WE *KILL* PEOPLE. WE'RE
NOT ROCK-CLIMBING
HELPER GUYS.

OBVIOUSLY.



I PAY YOU
TO--OH MY
CRAP!



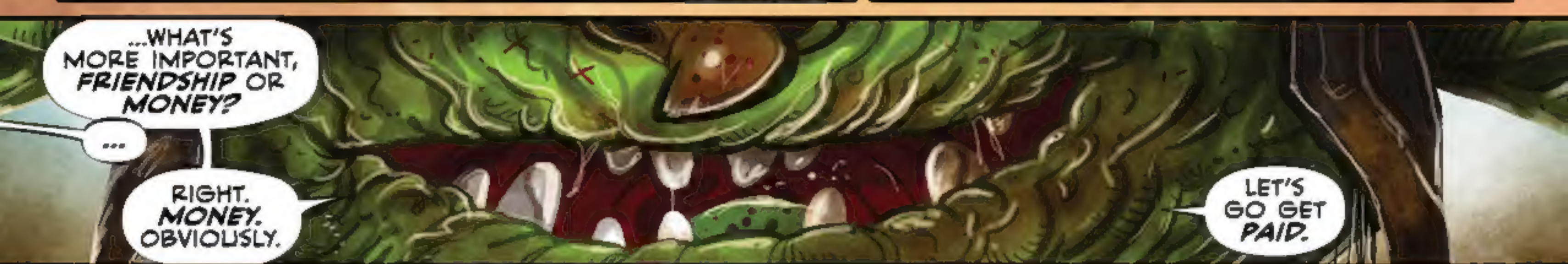
AN *OGRE*! KILL IT!
KILL IT, YOU *IDIOT*
MERCENARIES!



AN *OGRE*.

WE AIN'T
ATTACKING
NOTHING. OUR
CONTRACT
WAS UP AT
SUNRISE...



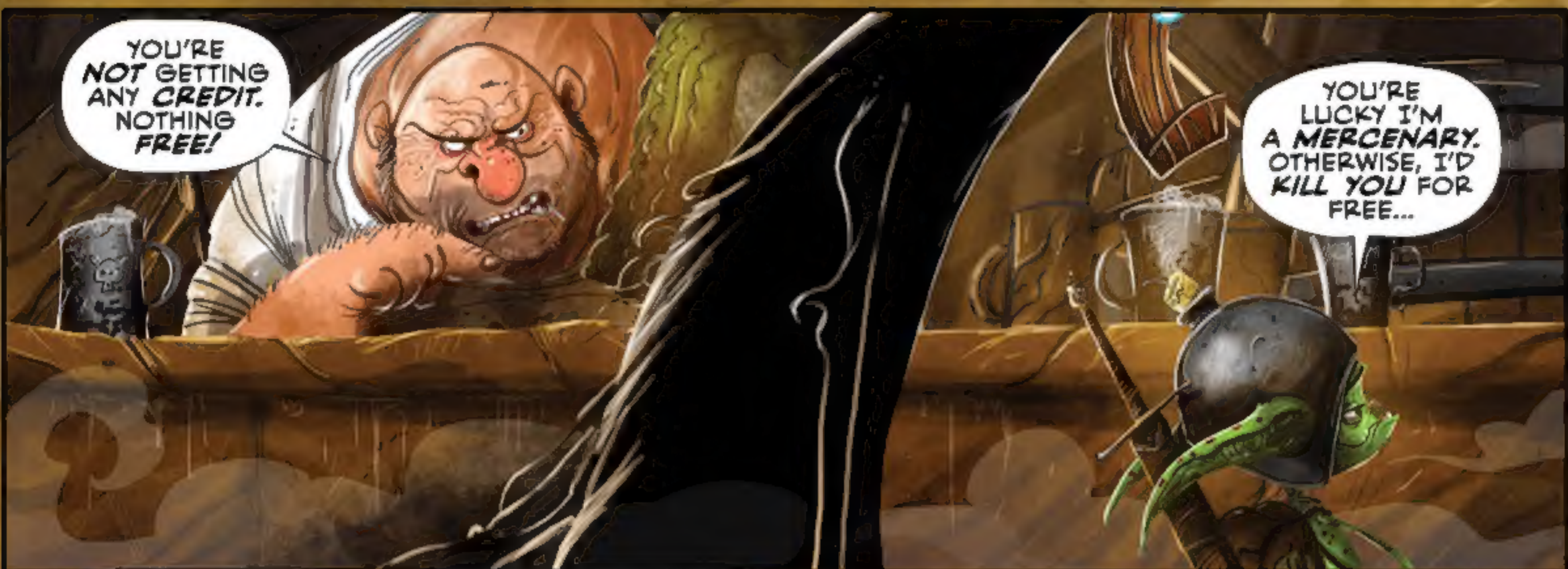




OKAY, SO
WE WORKED
HARD AND
DIDN'T GET
PAID.

...

I'LL MAKE
IT UP TO YOU.
I'LL BUY YOU A
DRINK JUST AS
SOON AS YOU
EARN US SOME
MONEY.



YOU'RE
NOT GETTING
ANY **CREDIT**.
NOTHING
FREE!

YOU'RE
LUCKY I'M
A **MERCENARY**.
OTHERWISE, I'D
KILL YOU FOR
FREE...

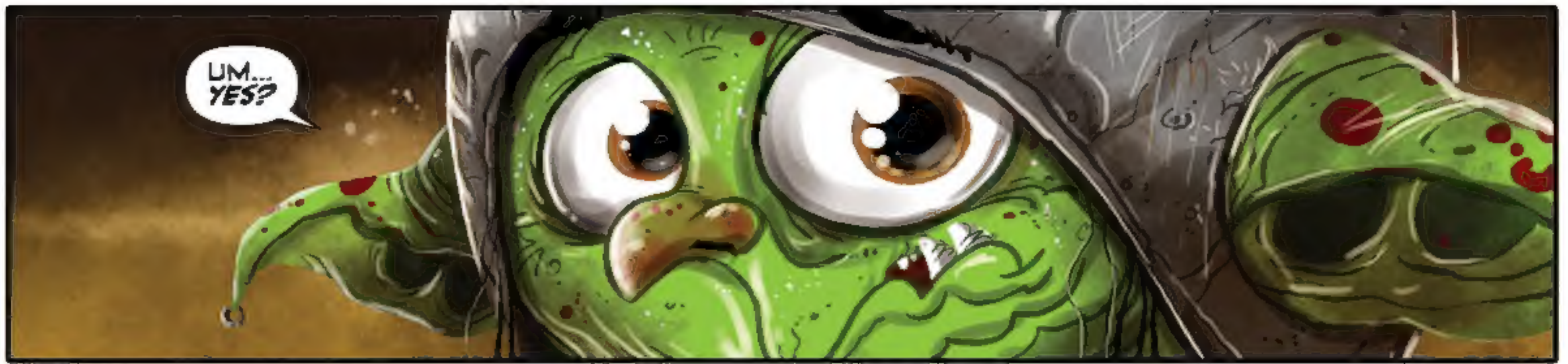


ATTENTION,
TAVERN PATRONS
AND ASSOCIATED
SCUM!

WE ARE **ROB** AND
DOP, THE WORLD'S GREATEST
ASSASSINS FOR HIRE! DEADLY
FREELANCE MURDERERS!
THINKING ABOUT A **BEHEADING?**
WE'LL DO IT **CHOP-CHOP!** NEED
A **NOOSE?** HANG ON,
WE'LL HANDLE IT!

WANT
YOUR MOTHER
SMOTHERED? WE'VE
GOT YOU **COVERED!**
AND BY YOU, I MEAN
YOUR VICTIM. UNLESS
YOU WANT TO BE
SMOTHERED TOO,
WHICH COSTS
EXTRA...

ARE YOU
STUPID? OR
DO YOU JUST
LOOK LIKE
IT?



UM...
YES?



HAVEN'T YOU
HEARD THE
NEWS?

OF COURSE
I'VE HEARD THE NEWS,
HOLLY. I'M EXTREMELY
WELL-INFORMATED.

JUST
REMINDE
ME WHICH
NEWS YOU
MEAN...

HOLLYBRANCH:
BARMAID AND
KNOWER OF THINGS.



THE WHOLE KINGDOM
NEEDS MERCENARIES.
EVERYBODY'S FIGHTING
EVERYBODY ELSE.

PITCHING
IN A TAVERN
IS STUPID.



I KNEW THAT! JUST TESTING
YOU. NOW...DO YOU KNOW WHY
EVERYBODY IN THE KINGDOM
IS FIGHTING?

I KNOW,
OF COURSE.
I WANT TO
SEE IF YOU
KNOW.



FIRST
ADMIT THAT
YOU DON'T
KNOW.

OKAY,
I DON'T
KNOW, HOLLY.
PLEASE TELL
ME.

BUT I
KNOW LOTS
OF OTHER
THINGS. SEXY
THINGS...

KING DED IS DEAD.
HE DROWNED IN A
WINE BARREL WITH
NO HEIRS.

NICE
DEATH IF
YOU CAN
GET IT.

"FIVE FACTIONS HAVE ALL SPRUNG UP TO
CLAIM THE *THRONE*. THEY HAVE ARMIES OF
GOBLINS, *DWARVES*, *DOPPELGANGERS*,
KNIGHTS, AND THE *UNDEAD*.

"EDWANDO THE
WIZARD. *GOBLINS*
FOLLOW HIS KOOKY
MAGICAL BELIEFS.
THEY'RE ALL STUPID.

"QUEEN BUTTERNUT. SHE
PUT ALL HER STRENGTH
INTO A *DWARF* MILITARY.
MAYBE A LITTLE STUPID?

"ASH THE LESSER.
A ROYAL WHO WANTS TO
WATCH THE WORLD BURN,
THE *DOPPELGANGERS*
ARE DOWN TO HELP HIM
ELIMINATE SOME HUMANS
TO MAKE THEIR JOBS
EASIER...

"LADY LUMPSE. SHE'S
SKILLED IN THE ARTS OF
COURTLY LOVE, AND MANY
KNIGHTS HAVE PLEDGED
LOYALTY TO HER MESSAGE
OF LOVE AND PEACE
(WHICH WILL COME RIGHT
AFTER THE VIOLENT PURGE
OF THE REALM).

"LORD GLIMMER. A
WEALTHY ARISTOCRAT,
HE COMMANDS A
WELL-FUNDED ARMY
OF THE *UNDEAD*.
GROSS."

"WHAT ABOUT THE
KING'S FABLED
TWIN NIECES?"

"THEY'RE
FABLED."

"OH,
RIGHT."



LOTS OF
FACTIONS VYING
FOR THE THRONE!
WONDERFUL!
STUPIDENOUS!

WHO SHOULD
WE **MURDER**
FIRST? WHO'S
EXPENSIVE?

...

HAVE
YOU GIVEN
IT ANY
THOUGHT,
DOP?

WE WERE **BORN** FOR
THIS! WE COULD HELP THE
NEXT RULER **CLAIM** THE
THRONE! AND WE **CLAIM**
THE **RICHES!**

HAVE
YOU FIGURED
OUT **WHICH**
FACTION--?

...

OH.
THAT
ONE?

WANT JOB
TO KILL PEOPLE
FOR MONEY

THE WIZARD
EDWANDO,
HUH? THAT'S
COOL.

HE ALREADY
HAS AN **ARMY**
OF **GOBLINS**, SO I
THOUGHT WE'D JOIN
UP SOMEWHERE I'D
STAND OUT MORE,
BUT...WHATEVER.
I TRUST YOUR
JUDGMENT...





HERE'S ONE:

TO PROVE YOUR COURAGE IN BATTLE, YOU MUST RETRIEVE **THREE FEATHERS** FROM THE MYTHICAL BEAGLE EAGLE HIGH ATOP BIRD DOG MOUNTAIN.



WEIRD COINCIDENCE, BUT WE DID THAT ON OUR WAY HERE, SO WE'LL SKIP THAT QUEST AND JOIN UP.

...



NOPE. DOESN'T COUNT.

WHAT? ARE YOU CRAZY? THEN WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?

GO FIGHT HIM.



AN OGRE.
LIKE A GOBLIN
EXCEPT GIANT.

OKAY, DOP, I'LL FIGHT HIS **LEFT LEG**. YOU TAKE THE REST.

...



ON SECOND THOUGHT, MAYBE I'LL JUST TAKE HIS **LEFT FOOT** AND--OOF!



HELLO, MY
LOYAL GOBLIN
FOLLOWERS!

AS YOU KNOW,
I AM THE **WIZARD
EDWANDO**, AND
I'D LIKE TO REMIND
YOU THAT I'M **JUST
LIKE YOU EXCEPT
BETTER** IN EVERY
WAY.



REMEMBER,
AS A WIZARD, MY
MAGIC IS ONLY
AS STRONG AS
YOUR **BELIEF**.

SO SHOW YOUR
BELIEF BY GIVING
ME YOUR MONEY,
RUBBING MY FEET,
AND **KILLING MY
ENEMIES!**



SOME PEOPLE
SAY GOBLINS ARE
NOT SMART
BECAUSE YOU
DECIDED TO JOIN
THE **CULT OF
EDWANDO...**

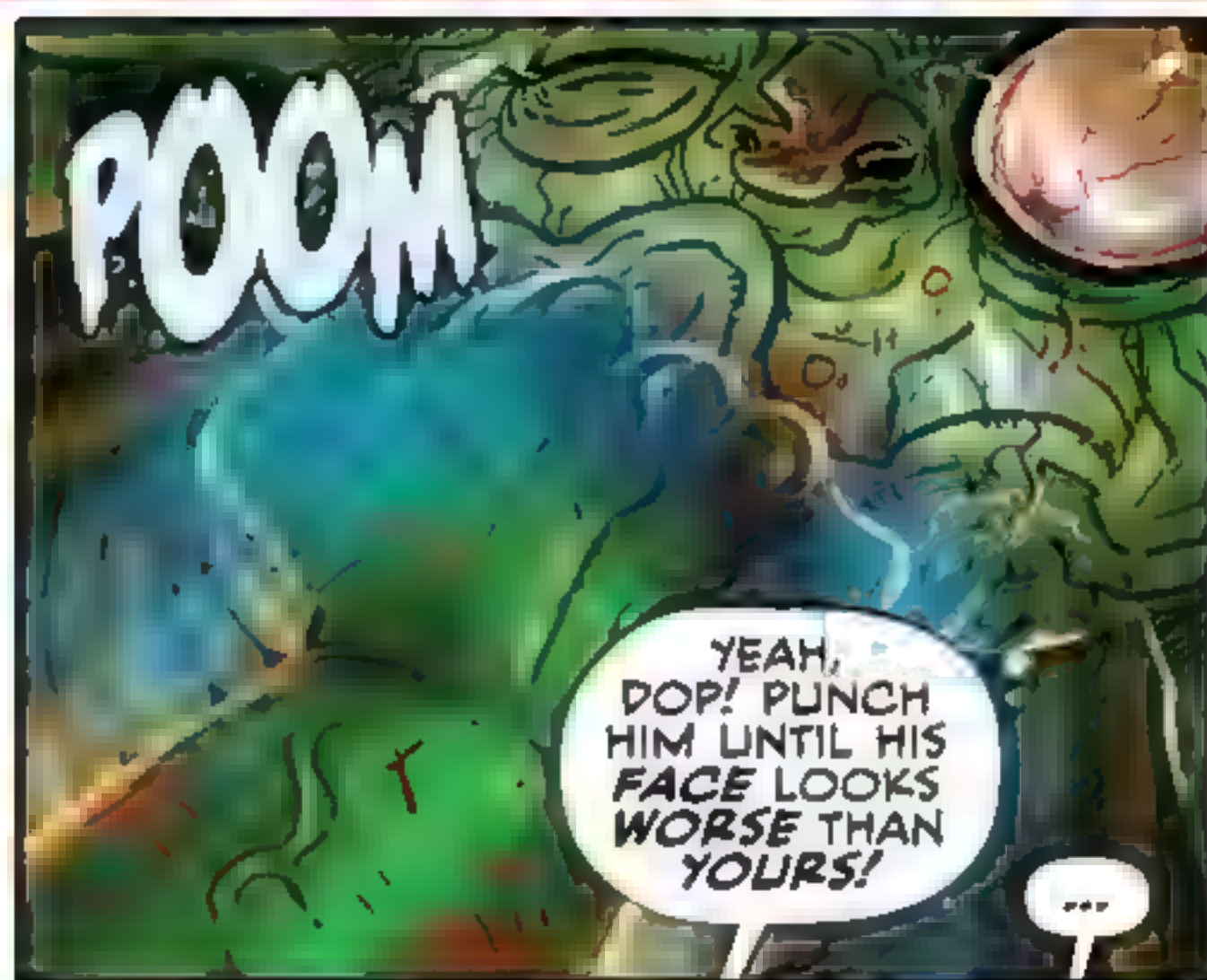
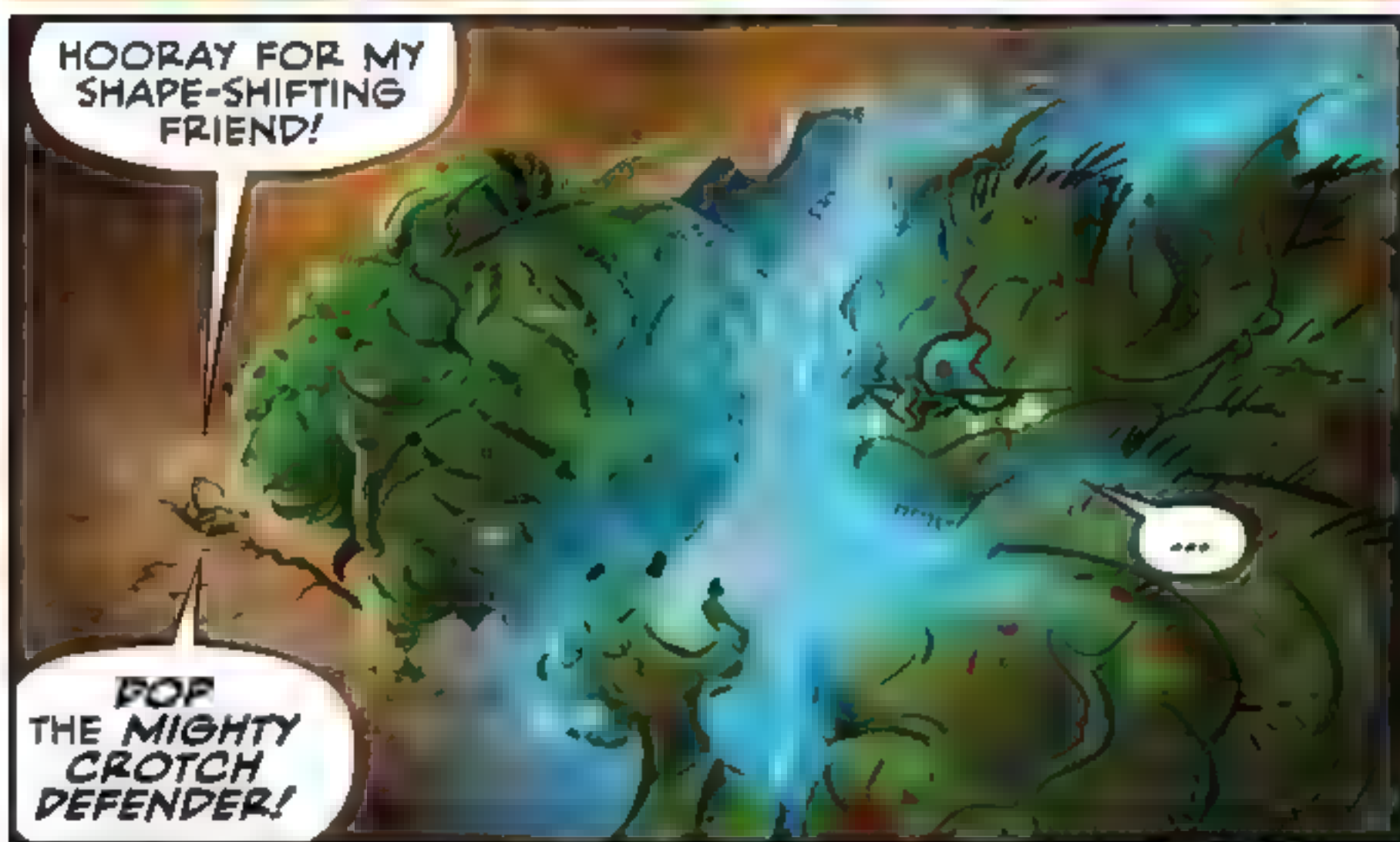
BUT I
SAY THERE
ARE **MANY
REASONS
YOU'RE NOT
SMART!**



WE SHALL
NOW BEGIN
OUR **CEREMONIAL
FIREWORKS SHOW**
TO CELEBRATE
LIFE OR ME OR
WHATEVER.

I HOPE
YOU ALL FIND
IT TO BE...
MAGICAL!







LOOK
OUT,
DOP!



THIS STILL
COUNTS AS US
DEFEATING HIM,
RIGHT?

...

THRUMTCH

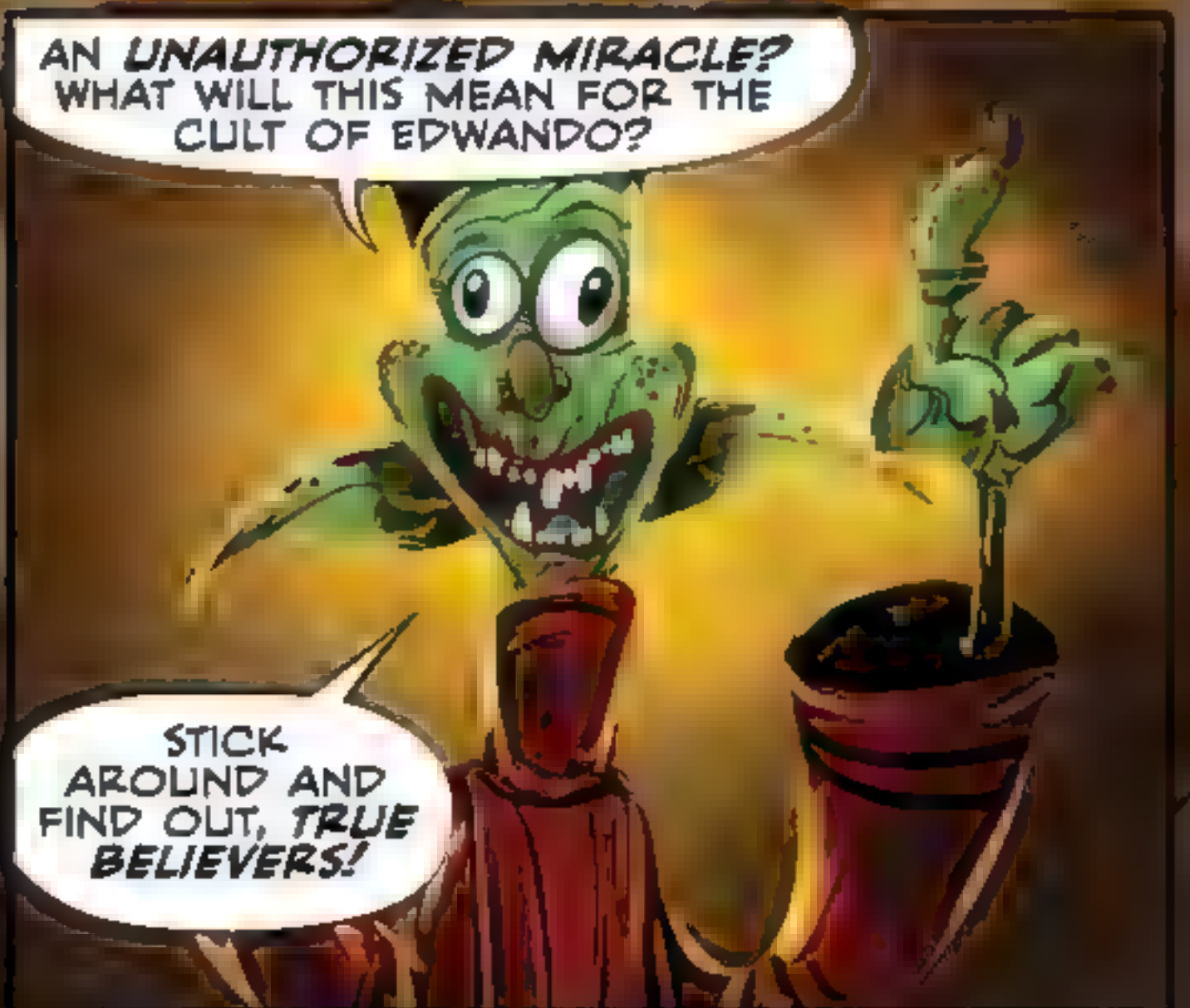


DID YOU SEE THAT?
THESE TWO GOBLINS
ARE DESTINED TO
JOIN THE CULT OF
EDWANDO! IT'S A
MIRACLE!

NO, IT
WASN'T.




HOLD
ON! JUST A
MINUTE! I DID NOT
AUTHORIZE THIS
MIRACLE!



AN UNAUTHORIZED MIRACLE?
WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR THE
CULT OF EDWANDO?

STICK
AROUND AND
FIND OUT, TRUE
BELIEVERS!



I CAN
NO LONGER
BELIEVE WHAT
I BELIEVED
BEFORE!

I'M NOW A
REFORMED
PRESTIDIGITARIAN!

I'M NOT FALLING
FOR THE *HYPE*. I'M
STAYING IN THE
CULT OF EDWANDO
OF LATTER-PAY
WIZARDS.

NOT ME!
I'M JOINING THE
SEVENTH DAY
CONJURISTS!

GRETCHEN!
I HOPE WE'LL SEE
YOU AT THE *UNIVERSAL
ILLUSIONIST* CULT PICNIC
TONIGHT WITH SOME
OF YOUR DELICIOUS
PORCUPINE PIE.

BLESS YOUR
HEART, BUT I ONLY
ATTEND *ILLUSION
UNIVERSALIST* CULT
PICNICS NOW, GRETA.
AND YOU SHOULD
LAY OFF THE
PIE, DEAR.

MY FAMILY
IS ALL *ORTHODOX
INCANTATIONIST*!

BORED
AGAIN *ORTHODOX
INCANTATIONIST*...

I SAY WE'RE
TRADITIONALIST
NECROMANCERS.

NO, SIR. WE'RE
NECROMENNONITES.





STOP! DON'T!
LOOK, LET'S
NEGOTIATE!

YOUR DONATIONS
ARE **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!**
I DON'T CARE IF YOU
EAT **MEAT** ON FRIDAYS!
DON'T HURT
MEEEEEEEE!

I HAVE A WHOLE NEW
**PHILOSOPHICAL
QUESTION:**

NOW WHO'S
GOING TO
PAY US?

...

WAIT! **MIRACLE
MERCENARIES!** WE
NEED NEW **LEADERS!**
TELL US WHAT TO
BELIEVE!

WHAT,
ARE YOU
CRAZY?

...

UH, **GOOD POINT.**
LOOK WHAT THEY
DID TO THE LAST
PERSON TO CALL
THEM **CRAZY...**

YOU
WANT SOME
LEADERSHIP?
TRY THIS:

FEEL **GUILTY**
ALL DAY, DON'T
BOTHR ME WITH
YOUR **DUMB
QUESTIONS,** AND
KEEP THOSE
OFFERINGS
COMING!



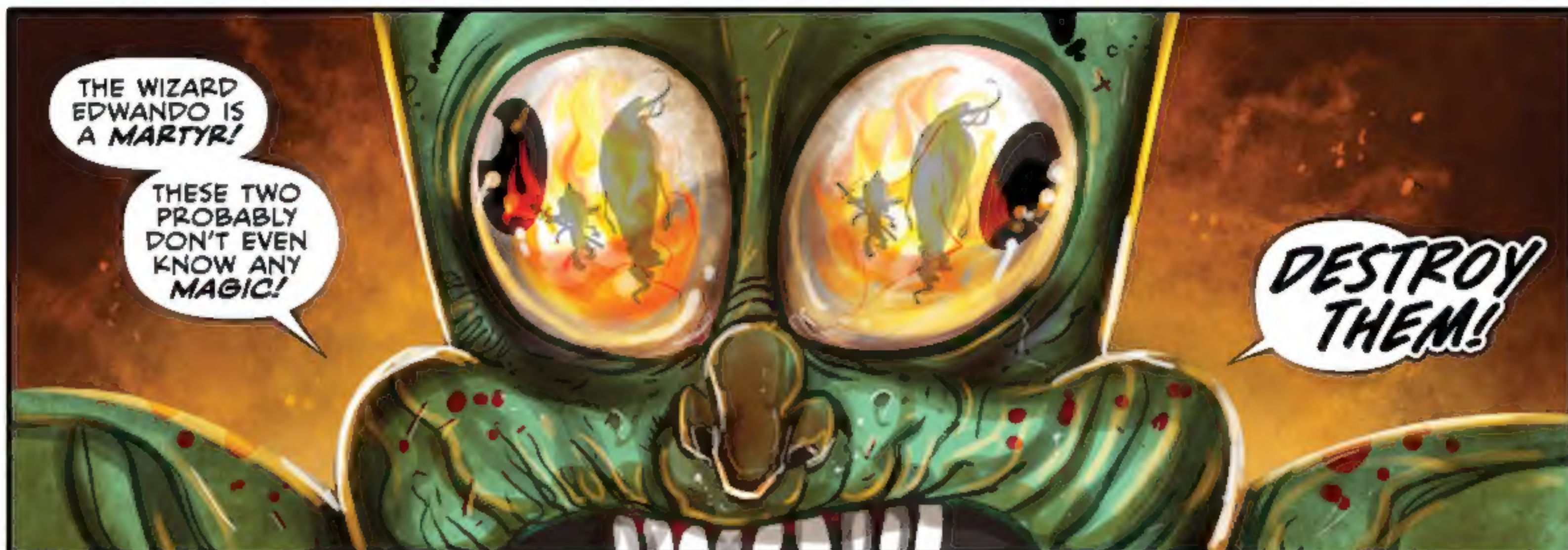
SEE, DOP?
THIS WAS A
GOOD GIG
AFTER ALL!

...



SOMEBODY HELP ME
CALCULATE 10% OF MY
TREASURE HORDE FOR
AN OFFERING...

DON'T YOU
SEE WHAT
THE **FALSE**
LEADERS
MADE US
DO?



THE WIZARD
EDWANDO IS
A **MARTYR!**

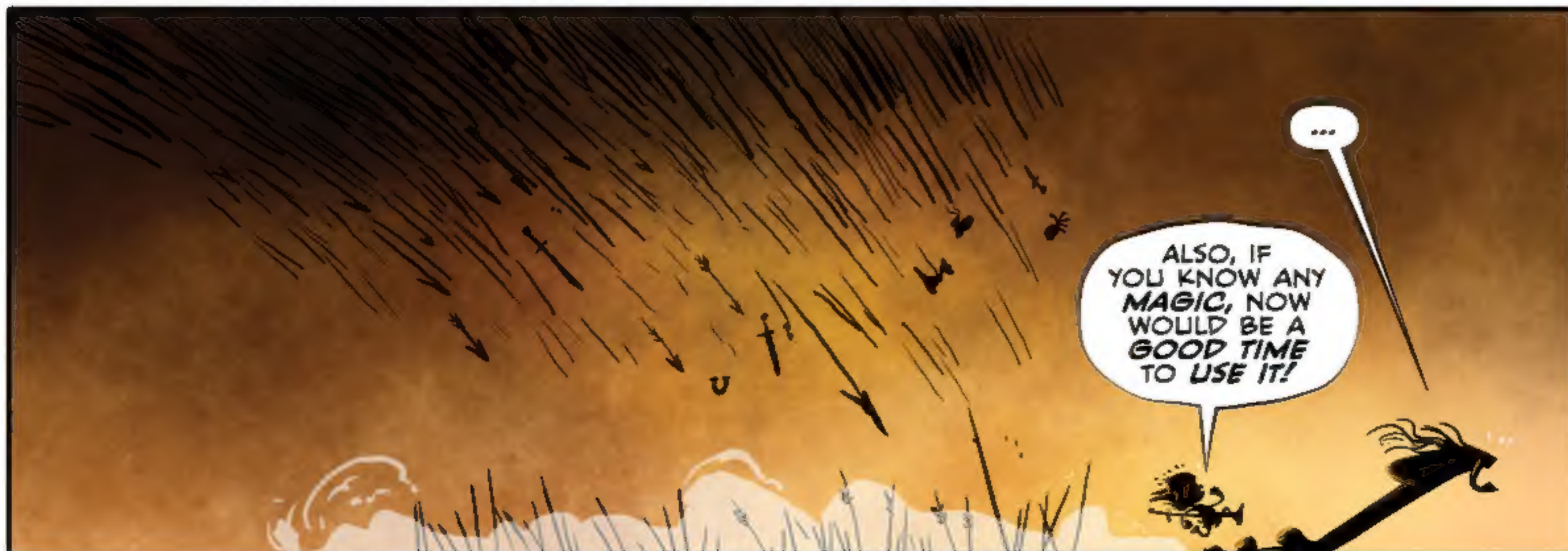
THESE TWO
PROBABLY
DON'T EVEN
KNOW ANY
MAGIC!

**DESTROY
THEM!**



...

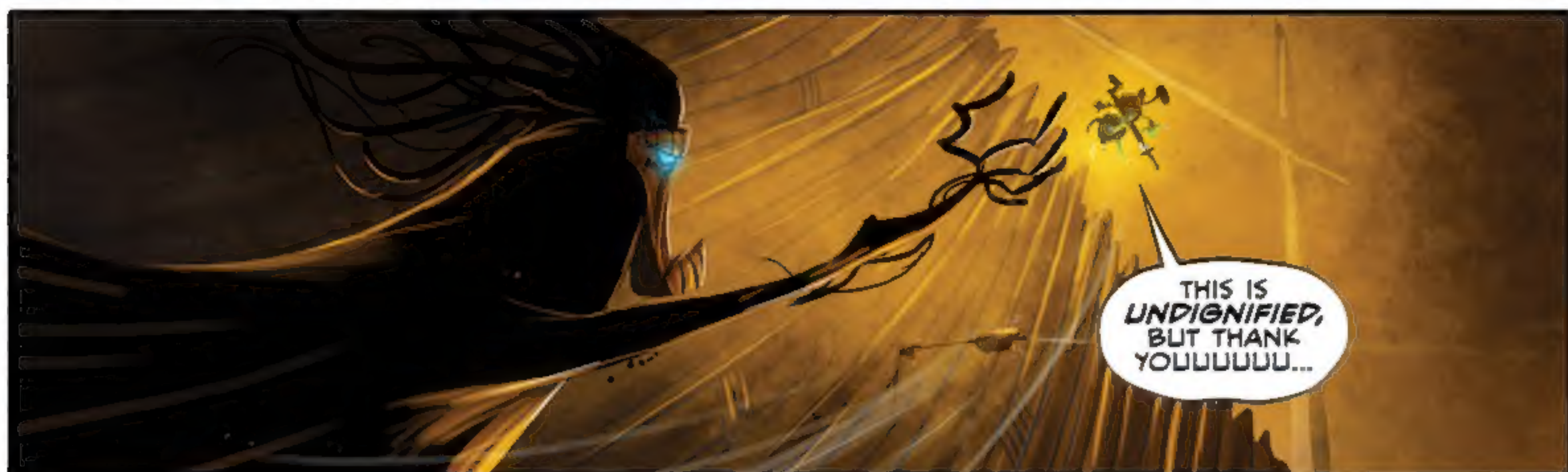
NO,
DOP, THIS
WAS **NOT** A
GOOD GIG
AFTER
ALL.



...

ALSO, IF
YOU KNOW ANY
MAGIC, NOW
WOULD BE A
GOOD TIME
TO **USE IT!**







THESE TWO
CAME FROM
EDWANDO'S
CAMP.

SHOULD WE
INTERROGATE
THEM?

DON'T
BOTHER.
JUST **KILL**
THEM.



WE ARE DEALING
WITH THE MILITARY
MIGHT OF THE ENTIRE
DWARF ARMY. THAT
MEANS **CERTAIN**
DEATH.

...

DO
YOU THINK
THEY'RE
HIRING?